

Rehab TIP SHEET #5

Swallowing Strategies

Some people need to use different postures or maneuvers to be able to swallow more safely and effectively. They may need to hold their head in a certain position or consciously swallow in a certain manner, and it is very important that these techniques be used with **every** swallow. Not all exercises and maneuvers are appropriate for every person, so it is recommended to first consult a certified Speech Pathologist before beginning any routine.

- Swallowing Maneuvers:

1. Chin Tuck - This involves touching the chin to the neck (as shown in picture on the right). This narrows the airway entrance and positions the epiglottis to protect the airway more effectively.



2. Head Turn (turn to the weak side as shown in picture on the left) – This closes off the weak side of the pharynx and redirects the food bolus through the more normal side.

- Swallowing Exercises to increase tongue and throat muscles: (Do 10 each twice a day)

1. Produce good strong /k/ and /g/ sounds in words such as key, cookie, go, girl, giggle, etc.
2. Stick out tongue and press it against tongue depressor of the crossbar apparatus, pushing two blades together with the tongue. (Shown in picture is two tongue depressors taped together and one placed horizontally down between them).
3. Stick out tongue; hold it between upper and lower teeth while swallowing.
4. Complete an effortful swallow by squeezing very hard with the tongue and the muscles of the throat while swallowing. Also try with a chin tuck.



5. Utilize an incentive spirometer to improve breathing for cough strength. Close your mouth around the mouth piece and inhale swallowing and deeply as shown in picture on the left.
6. Produce a good strong /ee/ sound.
7. Say /ee/ and go from a low pitch voice to a high pitch voice. Hold the higher pitch for 2-3 seconds.
8. Hock and spit like getting phlegm up in the throat.

- Tracheostomy

A tracheostomy is a surgical opening created through the neck into the trachea. This opening is called a “stoma.” A tube is then placed through this opening to provide an airway and to remove secretions from the lungs. Instead of breathing through the nose and mouth, the patient will breathe through the tracheostomy tube.

Speaking with a trach: (Passey-Muir speaking valve)

Before using the Passy –Muir valve, read the entire manufacturer’s instruction booklet. A Passy-Muir speaking valve allows a person with a tracheostomy to speak more normally. The one-way valve attaches to the outside opening of the tracheostomy tube and allows air to pass into the tracheostomy, but not out through it. The valve opens when the person breathes in. To speak, the valve closes when the person breathes out and air is diverted up through the vocal cords allowing sound to be made. The person breathes out through the nose and mouth instead of through the tracheostomy.

Keep in mind that some people may immediately adjust to breathing with the valve in place. Others may need to gradually increase the time the valve is worn. Breathing out with the valve is harder work than breathing out through the tracheostomy tube. Not everyone can tolerate wearing a speaking valve. Use should be discontinued if breathing is difficult.



←Using the Passy-Muir Speaking Valve.

The valve can only be placed on a deflated cuff or cuffless trach. To deflate cuff, insert syringe and pull air out of pilot tube. Pull air out until the plastic balloon is flat and no air remains.

- If needed, suction the trach before placing the valve

- Gently push the Passy-Muir speaking valve on top of the trach tube to attach. The speaking valve should be snug, but not forced too tightly.
- To remove, pull off the speaking valve by using a gentle twisting motion.



Important Safety Precautions:

- Do not use the valve while sleeping
- The valve should only be used in the direct presence of persons who know how it works and how to correctly use it.
- Remove the valve immediately if breathing becomes difficult. Suction and/or change the tracheostomy tube if needed.
- The entire manufacturer’s instruction booklet must be read prior to using the Passy-Muir Valve.